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The Relationship between Exod 31,12-17 and Jubilees 2,1.17-33

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STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS

REDACTION – RECEPTION – INTERPRETATION

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXOD 31,12-17 AND JUBILEES 2,1.17-33

1. *The Book of Exodus and the Book of Jubilees*

The Book of Jubilees consists of a rewriting of the biblical narrative of the book of Genesis: the primeval history and the history of the patriarchs, with a special emphasis on Jacob. For this reason one of the traditional names of the book is *The little Genesis*¹. However, the book of Jubilees deals also with the book of Exodus.

First of all, the Book of Jubilees presents itself not merely as a rewriting and interpretation of the biblical words, but as a revelation which Moses received at Mount Sinai. In the beginning of chapter 1, the author combines Exod 19,1 (the arrival of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai) and Exod 24,18-21 (the ascension of Moses on the mountain to receive the tables of stone) to describe the scene for the revelation².

Secondly, in the actual revelation, which comes from the heavenly tables and which is mediated to Moses by an angel of the presence (Jub 1,29-2,1), the narrative of Exod 1-14 is represented at the end of it, in Jubilees 46,11-48,19. It is a very condensed rendering, however. Some passages are omitted, whereas other passages are abbreviated very much. I point only to the story of the plagues (Exod 7-12), with which the author deals in just four verses (Jub 48,5-8). Besides, in these chapters the author puts many additions to the story which have no relation to the biblical text at all. It seems as if the author has lost completely his interest in the biblical story after he finished his recounting of the story of the patriarch Jacob. He probably wishes to bring to an end the revelation to

1. This name occurs in four different forms Ἡ Λεπτὴ Γένεσις (e.g., Epiphanius); Ἡ Λεπτογένεσις (e.g., Didymus of Alexandria); τὰ λεπτὰ Γενέσεως (Syncellus); Ἡ Μικρογένεσις (Jerome). All forms probably reflect an original Hebrew form: בְּרֵאשִׁית זוּטָא. See H. RÖNSCH, *Das Buch der Jubiläen oder Die Kleine Genesis*, Leipzig, 1874 (= Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 461-468; R.H. CHARLES, *The Book of Jubilees or The Little Genesis*, London, 1902, pp. xv-xvi.

2. Exod 19 and 24 are parallel versions of the episode of Mount Sinai, which supplement each other in many ways. Jub 1,1-4 may be an example of a text which reflects a version in which elements of both chapters have been combined. According to E. TOV, 4Q364. 4QReworked Pentateuch^b, in H.W. ATTRIDGE *et al.*, *Qumran Cave 4 – VIII. Parabiblical Texts. Part 1* (DJD, 13), Oxford, 1994, pp. 221-222, the text of 4Q364 (Frg. 14) may also reflect a version in which elements of both chapters have been combined (i.e., Exod 19,17 and Exod 24,12-14).

Moses as quick as possible. According to the author the content of the revelation, which started with the account of the creation, should end more or less with Moses himself, with the moment that he ascends Mount Sinai. In Exod 15,22 (quoted in Jub 49,23) and in Exod 16,1 (quoted in Jub 50,1) Moses is on his way to Mount Sinai, whereas in Exod 19,1 (quoted at the very beginning of the book) this journey is completed.

Thirdly, the book of Exodus plays also an important part in some of the additions which the author adds to the biblical narrative and which mainly deal with *halakhic* matters (e.g. offering, circumcision, the calendar, the sabbath, and the festivals). I point to the laws concerning the feast of Passover in Jubilees 49, which use many details from Exod 12–13, and to the laws concerning the sabbath in Jubilees 2 and 50, which borrow material from several passages of the book of Exodus (Exod 16,29; Exod 20,8–11; 23,12; 31,12–17; 35,2).

In this paper I shall restrict myself to Jubilees 2. According to several commentators the author makes extensive use of Exod 31,12–17, to which he puts his own modifications³. However, the exact relationship between both texts is not thoroughly dealt with. I shall focus on the following question: Does a verifiable relation between Jub 2 and the *text* of Exod 31,12–17 exist? First, I will have a short look at both texts separately, then I will go into their relationship.

2. Exod 31,12–17

Exod 31,12–17 is a speech of YHWH to Moses which contains instructions with regard to the sabbath. Despite the doublets and tensions within this text⁴, it is impossible to reconstruct an original text or to rewrite the redaction-history of it convincingly. Therefore, I would like

3. Among others O.-H. STECK, *Die Aufnahme von Genesis 1 in Jubiläen 2 und 4 Esra* 6, in *JSJ* 8 (1977) 154–182, p. 160: “Wie die zahlreichen Bezugnahmen in Jub 2,17–33 auf den Sabbatabschnitt Exod 31,12–17 in der biblische Sinaiperikope zeichnen muß demnach die ganze Engelrede Jub 2 als Aufweitung dieser biblischen Jahwerede an Mose verstanden werden. *Das ganze Kapitel Jub 2 is also die Ex 31,12ff entsprechende Kundgabe des Sabbatsgebotes für Israel an Moses auf dem Sinai, aber abweichend von der biblischen hier aus Engelmund und mit bezeichnenden Erweiterungen*”. (Steck’s italics)

4. See G. VON RAD, *Die Priesterschrift in Hexateuch* (BWANT, 65), Stuttgart – Berlin, 1934, p. 62; M. NOTH, *Das zweite Buch Mose. Exodus* (ATD, 5), Göttingen, 1978, p. 198; H. SCHULZ, *Das Todesrecht im Alten Testament. Studien zur Rechtsform der Mot-Jumat-Sätze* (BZAW, 114), Berlin, 1969, pp. 57–58; M. KÖCKERT, *Leben in Gottes Gegenwart. Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes in der priesterschriftlichen Literatur*, in *JBT* 4 (1989) 29–61, pp. 53–56.

to emphasize the literary unity of the passage⁵. The doublets and tensions can be explained by the fact that the text contains several quotations from and allusions to other texts⁶. Parallels of nearly all the phrases and sentences of Exod 31,12-17 does exist in the Old Testament. However, the priestly writer creates a new text by his own particular way to join together the different allusions and quotations.

The text stresses the enormous significance of the day. The commandment to keep it is repeated three times (vv. 13.14.16). Each time a reason for the commandment is given. The first time, in v. 13, it is said that the sabbath is a sign between YHWH and Israel to show that YHWH sanctifies his people. The second commandment (vv. 14-15) centres around the holiness of the sabbath. It is holy for Israel and for YHWH. The repetition of the capital punishment underlines the holiness of the day. The third time (vv. 16-17) the commandment is concerned with all the future generations. The sabbath should be kept for ever: it is a perpetual covenant, a sign forever. The allusion to the creation sabbath stresses the eternity of the day. Moreover, the first sabbath of God at the end of the creation is made into an example for the sabbath of Israel with regard to the *time* of the sabbath (the seventh day), the *nature* of the observing (stopping of work) and the *result* of the sabbath (refreshing)⁷. The three commandments to keep the sabbath are united by a concentric ordered structure of the text⁸, as can be seen in the following lay-out of Exod 31,12-17:

EXOD 31,12-17 (Translation: RSV with some modifications)

12a And YHWH said to Moses,

13a You, say to the people of Israel,

b “However, you shall keep my *sabbaths*

c A for this is a sign

d B between me and you

e C throughout your generations,

5. The unity of the passage is also supported by N. NEGRETTI, *Il Settimo Giorno. Indagine critico-teologica delle tradizioni praesacerdotali e sacerdotali circa il sabato biblico* (AnBib, 55), Rome, 1973, pp. 226-227; E. JENNI, *Die theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament* (TSt, 46), Zürich, 1956, pp. 20-25; N.-E.A. ANDREASEN, *The Old Testament Sabbath. A Tradition-Historical Investigation* (SBL DS, 7), Missoula, MT, 1972, pp. 69-71; K. GRÜN WALDT, *Exil und Identität. Beschneidung, Passa und Sabbat in der Priesterschrift* (BBB, 85), Frankfurt a.M., 1992, pp. 170-172.

6. An analysis of the relation between Exod 31,12-17 and other texts and traditions can be found in ANDREASEN, *Old Testament Sabbath* (n. 5), pp. 93-234; GRÜN WALDT, *Exil und Identität* (n. 5), pp. 173-185.

7. Cf. ANDREASEN, *Old Testament Sabbath* (n. 5), p. 197.

8. Cf. NEGRETTI, *Settimo Giorno* (n. 5), p. 226; GRÜN WALDT, *Exil und Identität* (n. 5), p. 172.

f		to know that I, YHWH, sanctify you.
14a		<u>You shall keep the <i>sabbath</i>,</u>
b		because it is holy for you;
c		anyone who profanes it
d	D	shall be put to death;
e	E	for anyone who does any work on it,
f		that soul shall be cut off from among his people.
15a	X	Six days shall work be done,
b		but the seventh day
c		is a <i>sabbath</i> of solemn rest,
d		holy to YHWH;
e	E'	anyone who does any work on the <i>sabbath</i> day
f	D'	shall be put to death.
16a		<u>The people of Israel shall keep the <i>sabbath</i></u>
b		observing the <i>sabbath</i>
c	C'	throughout their generations,
d		as a perpetual covenant.
17a	B'	Between me and the people of Israel
b	A'	it is a sign
c		for ever
d	X'	for in six days
e		YHWH made heaven and earth,
f		and on the seventh day
g		he kept <i>sabbath</i> and he was refreshed”.

The elements A till E circle around a structural centre: v. 15a-d (Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath). The importance of this centre is stressed by the fact that it is repeated at the very end of the text. The relation between v. 15a-d and v. 17d-g highlights again the relation between the creation sabbath and the sabbath of Israel. Finally, I point to some other stylistic characteristics of this text. Within vv. 13-15 the key-word is קדש (sanctify, holy) which occurs three times (vv. 13f. 14b.15d), whereas within vv. 16-17 the key-word is עולם (vv. 16d.17c). The unity of the pericope is stressed by the fact that the word “sabbath” occurs seven times.

3. Jubilees 2

Jubilees 2 is a rewriting of the first creation narrative in the Bible (Gen 1,1-2,3)⁹. Jubilees agrees with Genesis regarding when a work was created. In a formal sense, however, both texts differ fundamentally. Besides, the six days of creation are in Jubilees completely subordinated

9. A close examination of the agreements and disagreements between Gen 1,1-2,3 and Jub 2,1-33 can be found in STECK, *Die Aufnahme* (n. 3); J.C. VANDERKAM, *Genesis 1 in Jubilees 2*, in *DSD* 3 (1994) 300-321.

to the instruction with regard to the sabbath. Already the priestly author of Genesis attaches much importance to this day. The whole account of the creation culminates in the description of the seventh day. The author of Jubilees, however, shows even more interest in the Sabbath. It is not only mentioned at the end of the account, but also at the beginning of it¹⁰.

The instruction with regard to the sabbath in Jub 2 is in the first place an elaboration of the description of the seventh day of the creation in the book of Genesis. I point to the following agreements which the text of Jubilees 2 has with Gen 2,1-3. In Jub 2,1.16a God completes his work on the sixth day, and keeps sabbath on the seventh (cf. Gen 2,2ab)¹¹. In Jub 2,1 God sanctifies the sabbath (see also vv. 19, 23, 32; cf. Gen 2,3a). In different places the phrase "from all work" in relation to the keeping of the sabbath occur (Jub 2,17.20.28). Finally, the collocation of the words "to bless" and "to sanctify" occurs throughout the text of Jub 2,17-33.

The rendering of Gen 2,1-3 in Jub 2 is not a literal one. The author of Jubilees deviates in many respects with its model. He omits several elements, he modifies others and has also extensive additions which seems to have no relation with the text of Genesis. I point to the giving of the sabbath to the angels in Jub 2,17-18. God celebrates the first sabbath together with the angels. The sabbath is called a great sign, so that the seventh day is distinguished from the other days. I point also to the election and sanctification of Israel out of all the nations so that it can keep the sabbath on earth (Jub 2,19-22). Israel's election is built into the creation. The separation of Israel from among the nations is a component of the order of creation of God. Jubilees draws a strong analogy between the sabbath and the election of the people of Israel (Jub 2,23-24). After 22 works of creation God rested on the seventh day which is blessed and holy; so after 22 heads of humanity comes Jacob who is also blessed and holy. Jacob and his descendants alone among the nations keep sabbath. The text of Jubilees contains also the instruction to Moses to command the Israelites to keep the sabbath in vv. 26-28. It stresses the holiness of the day and the violation of it will result in capital punishment. This sanction was given already at the sabbath of the creation (v. 25). In Jub 2,29-30 Moses is instructed again to command the Israelites to keep the sabbath. This time an extensive list of regulations is given.

10. The rewriting of the creation seems to be an illustration of the phrase: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day he keeps the sabbath" (compare Gen 2,2.3; Exod 16,26.29.30; 20,10. 11; 23,12; 31,15; 34,21; 35,2; Lev 23,3; Deut 5,13-14).

11. We should note here that Jub 2,1 ("on the sixth day") is in agreement with the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint and the Peshitta against MT ("on the seventh day").

4. *Exod 31,12-17 and Jub 2,1.17-33*

As I mentioned before, according to several commentators the deviations of Jub 2 with respect to Gen 2,1-3 are brought about by the influence of Exod 31,12-17¹². The number of agreements between Jub 2 and Exod 31,12-17 is high. I point to the keeping of the sabbath (Jub 2,18.19.20.21.26.28.29.30.30.31), to the sabbath as a sign (Jub 2,1.17.21); to the holiness of the sabbath (Jub 2,23.27), to the sanctification of the people (Jub 2,19.20.21.31), to the phrases: "six days shall work be done, and the seventh day (is) a sabbath" (Jub 2,1.17; cf. v. 25), to the capital punishment with respect to the violation of the sabbath (Jub 2,25.27), and to the commandment to Moses to inform the Israelites with respect to this law (Jub 2,26.29), the sabbath should be kept throughout the generations (Jub 2,1.24.27.33). Furthermore, in both texts there is a connection between the sanctification of the people and the keeping of the sabbath. Finally, in both texts the commandment to keep the sabbath is related to the sabbath which the Lord kept on the seventh day of creation.

Although the verbal and thematic agreements between both texts are great, we should not overlook that the grammatical forms and the syntactical constructions of most of the verbal agreements in Jub 2 differ from Exod 31,12-17. Compare, for example Exod 31,13 ("However, you shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you ...") with Jub 2,17 ("He gave us the sabbath day as a great sign"). Furthermore, most of the agreements are not unique, that is to say that the common words, the common collocations of words and the common themes does occur also elsewhere in the Old Testament¹³. Finally, nothing is left of

12. Cf. above n. 3.

13. The "keeping of the sabbath" is found also in Lev 19,3.30; 26,2; Deut 5,12; Isa 56,2.4.6. The sabbath as a sign is also mentioned in Ezek 20,12.20. The holiness of the sabbath is referred to also in Exod 16,23; 35,2; Lev 23,3 (for YHWH); Exod 35,2; Lev 23,3; Isa 58,13; Neh 9,14 (for the people). God sanctifies the sabbath also in Gen 2,3; Exod 20,11, whereas the people sanctifies the sabbath in Exod 20,8; Deut 5,12; Jer 17,22.24.27; Ezek 20,20; 44,24; Neh 13,22 (Levites). The sanctification of the people is found also in Lev 20,8; 21,8.15.23; 22,9.16.32; Ezek 20,12; 37,28). The sequence of the phrases: "six days shall work be done, and the seventh day (is) a sabbath" occurs also in Gen 2,2.3; Exod 16,26.29.30; 20,10.11; 23,12; 34,21; 35,2; Lev 23,3; Deut 5,13-14. The capital punishment with respect to the violation of the sabbath is mentioned also in Exod 35,2; Num 15,38. Compare also Ezek 20,13.16.21.24; Neh 13,17.18, where the violation of the sabbath is followed by the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Isa 56,2.4.6). The collocation of the words "to violate" and "he shall be put to death" occurs also Lev 20,2-3. The connection between the sanctification of the people and the keeping of the sabbath occurs outside Exod 31,13 also in Ezek 20,12, whereas in Exod 20,8-11 the commandment to keep the sabbath is also related to the sabbath which the Lord kept on the seventh day of creation.

the careful composed structure of Exod 31,12-17 in Jub 2. My conclusion therefore is that one should be very cautious by attributing too much weight on a verifiable *textual* relation between Exod 31,12-17 and Jub 2. In most cases the author of Jubilees is rather depending on a broader sabbath tradition. He derives some of his phrases with respect to the sabbath from this tradition and develops it in his own particular way.

5. *Jubilees* 2,27

However, there is one possible exception to this conclusion, namely Jub 2,27. When one examines the grammatical forms and the syntactical constructions of this verse, and compares them with Exod 31, and when one examines the uniqueness of the agreements, the conclusion can safely be drawn that the author of Jub 2,27 is depending on the *text* of Exod 31,14-16. The recently published 4Q218 (Fragment 1, which contains the Hebrew version of Jub 2,26-27) makes the comparison between both texts much easier. It does also contain an additional argument for the dependency of the text on Exod 31. In the following synopsis I put side by side (in translation) the relevant parts of Exod 31,14-16 and the reconstructed text of 4Q218¹⁴.

Exod 31,14-16

4Q218, Frg. 1 (Jub 2,26-27)

14a	You shall keep the sabbath,		
b	because it is holy for you;	(26)	to sancti[fy it, not to do any work on it, and not do defile it, for] it is holier [than] all the (other) days.
c	anyone who profanes it	27	Anyone [who profanes it
d	shall be put to death;		shall be put to death,]
e	for anyone who does any		[and any]one who does work on it
	work on it,		
f	that soul shall be cut off from among his people.		shall be cut off [fore]v[e]r
15a-d		
ef	anyone who does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death.		

14. For the official edition of 4Q218, see J.C. VANDERKAM – J.T. MILIK, *4Q218. 4Q Jubilees*^c, in ATTRIDGE *et al.*, *Qumran Cave 4* (n. 2), pp. 35-38. I made some slight modifications to the translation in this edition in order to compare 4Q218 (frg. 1) with Exod 31,14-16.

16a	The Israelites shall keep the sabbath	[so] t[h]at [the Israelites may ke]ep thi[s] day
b	observing the sabbath	
c	throughout their generations,	[throughout] their [generatio]ns
d	as a perpetual covenant.	and not cut off from the ea[rth].]

I point to the following agreements:

- The violation (חלל) of the sabbath occurs also elsewhere in the Old Testament. Also the connection of חלל with the capital punishment (מות יומת) occurs elsewhere, but the combination of the violation of *the sabbath* and the capital punishment is unique in the Old Testament for Exod 31,14.
- The Ethiopic text of Jub 2,27b seems to reflect the text of Exod 31,15ef. This phrase (“anyone who does any work on the day of the sabbath”) followed by the death penalty occurs also elsewhere in the Old Testament. However, the combination of the violation of the sabbath with the mentioning of doing any work on it, occurs only in Exod 31,14-15. So also the Ethiopic text of Jubilees points undeniable to the text of Exodus.
- 4Q218 reads instead of the death penalty (מות יומת): “shall be cut off” (ונכרתה) in relation with the prohibition of doing any work on the sabbath. The use of כרת in connection with the sabbath occurs only in Exod 31,14.
- What is so peculiar in 4Q218 is the form of ונכרתה: third singular *feminine*, whereas the context in Jubilees demands a third singular *masculine*. The feminine form can of course be caused by the fact that the reading in many of the passages where a כרת-formula is used, is: ונכרתה. Or it may be brought about by the fact that the feminine word מלאכה (“work”) is used. But it is also possible that the author of Jubilees is here influenced by the text of Exod 31,14, which also reads ונכרתה, to which he deliberately left out הנפש ההוא (“that soul”) in order to put his own emphasis.
- Finally, there is also an agreement between a part of Exod 31,16 and Jub 2,27c (“The people of Israel shall keep the sabbath ... throughout their generations”).

The various agreements between Jub 2,27 and Exod 31,14-16 occur in the same order. Moreover, some of the disagreements can be explained as being an interpretation of the author of Jubilees of the text of Exod 31,12-17. I point to the reinforcement of the כרת-sanction. The writer of Jubilees does not say that the individual will be cut off *from among his people*, but that he will be cut off *forever* (27b) and *from the earth* (27d). With the use of למען the author of Jubilees

makes explicit the relation between the capital punishment and the keeping of the sabbath.

My question at the beginning of this paper was: Does a verifiable relation between Jubilees 2 and the *text* of Exod 31,12-17 exist? I tried to show that the answer on this question is not easy to give. Despite the overwhelming agreements between both texts, the uniqueness of them and the grammatical and syntactical forms, point to the conclusion that most of the agreements are due to a traditional use of them. Exod 31 might have influenced this tradition, but did not take this wording directly from this text. However, at least in one point (Jub 2,27) there is enough evidence to speak about a verifiable relationship between both texts.

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